

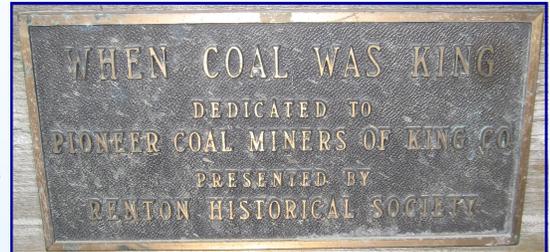
COAL CAR HISTORIC RECONSTRUCTION

Renton History Museum

Coal Car Commemorates Miners' Contributions

April 8, 2008

The coal mine car came to the Renton History Museum through the efforts of one of our founding members, Frank Storey. The son of pioneers Myles and Emma Storey, Frank was a career Navy man who never forgot his Renton roots. Frank briefly worked in the mines as a youth in the 1910s, and later in life he became convinced that the city ought to have a mining museum. The coal mine car was among the first objects he collected in the name of the Renton Historical Society (RHS). The car was donated in 1967 to the Society by Evan "Mickey" Johnson, owner-operator in the 1940s through the 1960s of the Johnson Mine located between Black Diamond and Ravensdale.



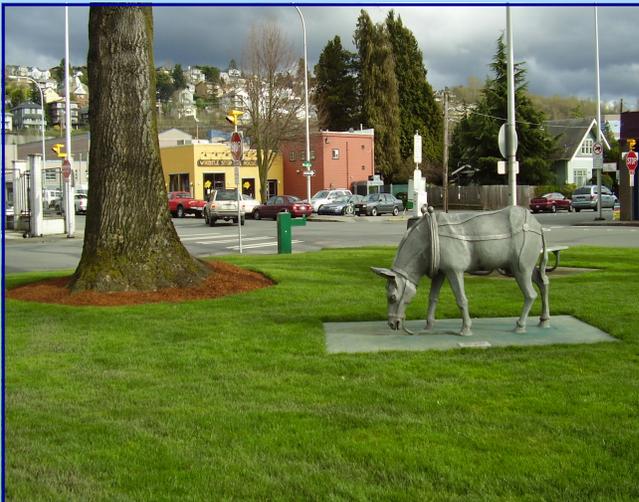
This plaque was added to the car in 1968 when it was placed in Tonkin Park.

In 1967 the Renton Historical Society did not yet have a museum, so Storey and RHS president Dusalina Cavaletto decided that the best use of the car was as a monument to miners in Tonkin Park. Students from the Renton Institutional Vocational School worked on the car, and Pacific Car and Foundry, McLendon Hardware, Renton Auto Parts, and Lumber Mart all donated various materials. It was truly a community project: Puget Power Company transported the mine car to the park, where it was installed on a base built by Renton Boiler Works and Stoneway Concrete.

On January 20, 1968 the coal car was unveiled at a ceremony in Tonkin Park attended by then-Mayor Don Custer and other dignitaries, many of whom were descended from Renton coal miners. Miss Cavaletto reminded the crowd that "the men who went down into the mines were a special breed," whose names "read like the roster of a small United Nations."

Ultimately exposure to the weather in Tonkin Park was hard on the coal mine car, and another set of repairs were necessary in the mid-1970s. While installation in a city park may not have been the best use of the car as a historic object, as a monument it did serve as a reminder of the

Renton's earliest industry. The RHS founders managed to preserve the car for our generation to improve on its care.



Present-day Tonkin Park in Downtown Renton.



Baby Frank Storey sits in his mother's lap in this 1903 photo. His father and grandfather, both named Myles, were coal miners. (RHM #1999.017.4995)